



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 4
ATLANTA FEDERAL CENTER
61 FORSYTH STREET
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-8960

FEB 21 2017

Mr. John D. Ericsson
BioMarine Technologies, Inc.
Gulf Marine Institute of Technology
P.O. Box 776
Gulf Breeze Florida 32562

RE: BioMarine and Gulf Marine Institute of Technology (GMIT) Aquaculture Facility
NPDES permit (AL0067237) renewal

Dear Mr. Ericsson:

The facility referenced above is covered by a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit that is issued by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 4. The purpose of this letter is to remind you that the NPDES permit for your facility expires on March 30, 2018, and that a complete application must be submitted to the EPA no later than 180 days prior to expiration of the permit (September 30, 2017). Additionally, we would like to provide some new and important information that is pertinent to the reissuance of the NPDES permit.

As you may know, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) now requires aquaculture operations in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico (GOM) to obtain a Gulf Aquaculture Permit. Given that there are many federal agencies that have responsibility for permitting or authorizing aquaculture operations in the GOM, the EPA has entered into an interagency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Permitting Offshore Aquaculture Activities in Federal Waters of the GOM. The purpose of this MOU is to provide a regulatory process that will provide protection for the ocean environment and facilitate coordination, consistency, and transparency amongst federal agencies when making permitting and authorization decisions.

It was also our goal to provide a simplified federal process that reduces the duplication of information needed for each agency and decrease the burden of the application process. The procedures that we have developed may also reduce the time it takes for applicants to obtain a permit. The below documents have been created to help potential applicants for aquaculture in the GOM navigate the federal permitting process and are available on the NMFS website.¹

- A Guide to the Application Process for Offshore Aquaculture in Federal Waters of the GOM
- Pre-Application Meeting Checklist
- Guidance and Procedures for the Baseline Environmental Survey for Marine Aquaculture Activities in Federal Waters of the GOM

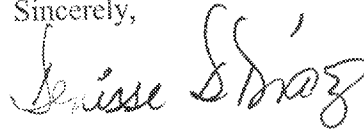
While the new process may require that you submit more information than you have in the past, the requirements are consistent with the Clean Water Act and its implementing regulations. A complete NPDES application is due within 180 days of permit expiration; however, we urge you to contact the appropriate federal agencies before the NPDES application is due. We strongly encourage you to participate in the

¹ All three documents, including the MOU, are available at: http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/gulf_fisheries/aquaculture/
Internet Address (URL) • <http://www.epa.gov>
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interagency pre-application meeting to discuss the facility and information that you will be required to provide. We believe that the pre-application meeting will help streamline the various federal permitting and authorization processes for your facility. Please contact Dr. Jessica Beck-Stimpert with the NMFS to initiate the pre-application meeting process.²

We look forward to working with you throughout this process. Please contact Mr. Kip Tyler at (404) 562-9294 or tyler.kip@epa.gov should you have specific questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,



Denisse D. Diaz, Chief
NPDES Permitting and Enforcement Branch
Water Protection Division

cc: Mr. Scott Brown, Alabama Department of Environmental Management
Ms. Michelle Uli Picou, Bureau of Ocean and Energy Management
Mr. Doug Peter, Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement
Dr. Jessica Beck-Stimpert, National Marine Fisheries Service
Mr. Brad Crosson, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Mr. Rusty Wright, U.S. Coast Guard
Mr. Jim Afghani, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Dr. Catherine Phillips, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

² Dr. Jessica Beck-Stimpert is the NMFS's Regional Aquaculture Coordinator for the GOM and can be reached at (727) 551-5755 or jess.beck@noaa.gov.